III. THE PSALMS[30]

The problems connected with the Psalter are endless, but those most assiduously discussed during the past twenty-five years may be grouped under four heads: (1) the historical question of the origin of the Psalter as a collection, (2) the question of the origin of the individual psalms, (3) the literary question of the nature of Hebrew poetry, with its necessary accompaniment of problems in textual criticism, and (4) the exegetical question concerning the speaker in the psalms, whether the "I" of the Psalter has an individual or a collective reference. The scholar who can answer these questions successfully must be possessed of an historical sense, a literary feeling, and an exegetical tact of a very high order. Since the psalms are hymns, and as such for the most part deal only with generalized or idealized experiences, the problem of their date and place in the development of the religion of Israel is a singularly complicated one. The dating of the psalms must rest on established dates in the rest of Hebrew literature, and one who undertakes the criticism of the Psalter must have a very clear and well-balanced conception of the problems of the religion of Israel. Without it the attempt to discuss, for instance, the tradition of the Davidic authorship of the psalms, or even their pre-exilic origin, would lead to no secure results. Again, the question of the nature of Hebrew poetry and its bearing upon textual criticism is one of the most vexed questions of Old Testament study. Few combine a gift for textual criticism with a fine literary sense. Finally, the problem of the nature of the speaker in the Psalter is one of the most fascinating and important, but at the same time one of the most delicate of exegetical problems.

The literature upon these various subjects, unlike the literature upon Chronicles, is enormous; but the recent commentaries, with which the work of Dr. Briggs would naturally be compared, are

[30] A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms. By Charles Augustus Briggs, D.D., D.Litt., Professor of Theological Encyclopaedia and Symbolics, Union Theological Seminary, New York, and Emily Grace Briggs, B.D. Two volumes. New York, 1906, 1907.

those of Baethgen in the *Handkommentar*, Duhm in the *Kurzer Hand-Commentar*, and Kirkpatrick in the *Cambridge Bible*. The first of these is marked by solid learning, clear exposition, and a commendable agnosticism in the matter of dating the psalms, but is perhaps too cautious in its textual criticism, and it is in no sense a creative work. Kirkpatrick's commentary belongs to the more elaborate and ambitious commentaries in the *Cambridge Bible*. It is clear and informing on its exegetical side, though largely an echo of Baethgen, but seems to be distinctly defective in its historical criticism. Attempts to find suitable situations for the psalms in David's life (compare, for example, the remarks on Ps. 41) should be abandoned. Duhm's commentary is the work of an expository genius, compact, clear-cut, illuminating, marked by a speculative daring that often throws a flood of light upon obscure passages or gives to what had become a platitude the interest of a newly discovered truth. But it has the defects of its author's other work. It is very one-sided, and maintains a theory of the origin of the Psalter in the late Maccabean period which conflicts with the external evidence and involves serious intrinsic improbabilities.[31] Nevertheless, if the reader does not allow himself to be dazzled by Duhm, he can probably learn from his pregnant pages more about the crucial problems of the Psalter, and in a shorter space of time, than from any other commentary.

As compared with the three works just mentioned, Briggs's commentary is a vast thesaurus of statistical facts. In its learning it is like one of the post-reformation Biblical treatises rather than a modern work. One can well believe that the labor of forty years, as the author informs us, has been crammed into its more than one thousand closely printed pages. As an example of erudition, this commentary is likely to remain a monument to one of the most learned American scholars of this generation. But is it an illuminating commentary? Does it make stimulating and suggestive contributions to the solution of the problems above referred to? This, if the present reviewer may be permitted to

[31] For instance, the view that we have whole series of violently polemical psalms, both Pharisaic and Sadducean, incorporated in our Psalter. How both these hostile groups of psalms could have been inserted into the Psalter in the short space of time which Duhm allows for its compilation after they were written, is not made clear.

express himself with absolute candor, it does not always appear to do. It is possible that Briggs's positions have not all been fully understood. The book is no easy reading. Its style is not infrequently opaque; the author's "buts" and "fors," when he provides them, often refer (like those of the Johannine gospel and epistles) to something in his own mind rather than to anything actually expressed, and the student is left to infer as best he can the connections which the writer may have had in mind. But those parts of the commentary which will be most severely criticised in what follows have been studied with care, and the effort honestly made to understand the positions to which exception has been taken.

Briggs's introduction treats at length of the Text, the Higher Criticism, the Canonicity, and the Interpretation of the Psalter. Under the caption "Higher Criticism" (pp. liv–xcii) are discussed the origin and growth of the Psalter as a collection, and an entirely new theory on this subject is advanced. Briefly, it is as follows: There was first an early collection of six *miktam* psalms (the word being explained after the rabbinic etymology as "golden" or "choice" psalms) made in the early Persian period. There was also a collection of thirteen *maskil* psalms (explained as "meditative poems") made in the late Persian period. About the same time (late Persian) the Davidic collection of psalms was formed, originally sixty-eight in number, although in the present Psalter we have seventy-four. This was the first of the minor psalters, andinto it were inserted all the *miktam* psalms and six of the *maskilim*. Next in order came the two originally independent collections of the Korah and Asaph psalms (late Persian or early Greek period). The Asaph collection adopted two of the *maskilim* not appropriated by the Davidic collection, and the Korah psalter adopted four others. The next stage in the evolution was the collection (early Greek period) of fifty-seven *mizmorim* (the technical word for "psalms"), which was a selection from the existing collections of certain of the Davidic, Asaph, and Korah psalms with the addition of a few others. This was apparently followed by the elohistic psalter (Pss. 42–83), a group of psalms in which the name Elohim is regularly used for God, although in their original form many of these psalms used Jahveh (middle

Greek period). It is inferred from the use of the divine name Elohim that this psalter was composed in Babylonia (a very precarious inference). The elohistic psalter also was made up of selections from David, Korah, and the *mizmorim*, and included all of Asaph. About the same time there came into existence in Palestine another psalter, containing fifty-five psalms, and known as the "director's psalter," this being Briggs's interpretation of the phrase which the English Bible renders "for the chief musician." Then arose the groups of *hallels* and pilgrim psalms, which were mainly compiled in the Greek period. In the Maccabean period the Psalter received its final shape, being divided into the five books which we find at present.

Both from the method and the results of this section of the introduction a thorough-going dissent must be recorded. In the first place, it seems to the present reviewer that the subject is approached from the wrong angle. The treatment is dominated by the chronological point of view, and an attempt is made to indicate the gradual growth of the Psalter out of preceding minor collections. This is all very well, but first of all it should be proved that such preceding minor collections existed. This is not done: we have merely the statement, "This is the way the Psalter grew," and the reader is left to guess which of the multitudinous facts presented in the course of the discussion would have been used to support the theory, if the author had chosen to state his argument. The complaint is not that the facts, or at least the more important ones, in support of a critical decomposition of the Psalter are not given, but rather that because of the chronological arrangement of the material facts which naturally go together and throw light upon each other and upon the critical structure of the Psalter, are violently separated and thus lose a large part of their evidential force.

In order to illustrate the confusion which arises from the chronological arrangement of the material, it may be well briefly to indicate the evidence commonly employed in the critical analysis of the Psalter, and then to show how this material is utilized by Dr. Briggs.

Criticism has usually started, and with obvious propriety, from the division of the Psalter into five books, a division plainly

indicated by the doxologies that stand at the end of the first four books. The doxologies, therefore, give us our first clue. On nearer inspection this fivefold division is seen to have been superimposed upon a more fundamental threefold division, the key to which is the alternation in the use of the divine names. Book I is a homogeneous collection of Davidic psalms, in which Jahveh is regularly used; in Books II–III, Elohim is regularly used; in Books IV–V, Jahveh is again used. Thus the elohistic redaction of the middle books of the Psalter furnishes our second important clue to the analysis. It will be observed that the doxology at the end of Book I coincides with a critical line of cleavage. If we turn to Books II–III, in which the elohistic psalms are found, four very distinct groups emerge: (*a*) a Korah Elohim-group (Pss. 42–49); (*b*) a Davidic Elohim-group (Pss. 51–72); (*c*) an Asaph Elohim-group (Pss. 73–83); (*d*) a Korah Jahveh-group (Pss. 84–89).[32]

The first thing that strikes the attention in this analysis is that the elohistic redaction does not quite coincide with the division into books. We should expect the dividing line, marked by the doxology, to fall at the end of the elohistic psalms (that is, after Ps. 83), and that Psalms 84–89, which are Jahveh psalms, would be combined with the Jahveh psalms of Books IV–V. On the other hand, this little group is principally a Korah group with close affinities to the elohistic Korah-group. The suggestion has been made that Psalms 84–89 are an appendix to the elohistic psalter. If so, the doxology at the end of Book III (Ps. 89 52) is again seen to have critical significance. Further, it would seem proper to postulate a somewhat different literary history for the two groups of Korah psalms. Otherwise, it is difficult to see why they did not all suffer an elohistic redaction.

In the second place, the elohistic redaction is unexpectedly broken in two by the division between Books II and III, again marked by the doxology, Ps. 72 18 f., and also by the remarkable editorial note, Ps. 72 20. Because of this division the Korah and Davidic Elohim-psalms are classed together and, with one Asaph psalm (Ps. 50), are separated from the group of Asaph

[32] Psalm 50 is an isolated Asaph psalm inserted between the Korah and Davidic psalms. The significance of its position is discussed below.

Elohim-psalms. The anomalous position of Ps. 72 20 has always been recognized; but the very peculiarity of its position gives it an unusual critical significance. It points to the necessity of a critical analysis both of what precedes and of what follows. It proves that the Davidic group (Pss. 51–72) must have once existed apart from the Korah group (Pss. 42–49), for this note is only appropriate at the end of a *homogeneous* Davidic collection. And we may go a step further with considerable probability. The Korah group (Pss. 42–49) and the Asaph group (Pss. 73–83) are the psalms of the two great levitical singing-guilds. They would naturally, therefore, be grouped together. The fact that this is not the case, but that the Korah group is illogically combined with the Davidic group to form Book II, strongly suggests that a collection of Korah and Davidic psalms was made before these were combined with the Asaph psalms to make up the Elohim psalter. Probably, then, the homogeneous group of Asaph psalms also had at one time an independent existence. It thus appears that the collections of the Davidic, the Korah, and the Asaph elohistic psalms all had once an independent existence; that the Davidic and Korah psalms were then grouped together in our present Book II; and, finally, that these two groups were combined with the Asaph psalms into the present Elohim psalter (Pss. 42–83).

But the editorial note, Ps. 72 20, enables us to draw still another inference. The writer of this note could not have known of any of the Davidic psalms that follow it in the present Psalter. Consequently, the scattered Davidic psalms in Books III and IV and the groups of Davidic psalms in Book V probably had a different literary history from the homogeneous Davidic Elohim-psalms of Book II. On the other hand, the relationship of the Davidic Elohim-group of Book II to the Davidic Jahveh-group of Book I is an unsettled question. Did these two groups originally form one collection, of which Ps. 72 20 was the conclusion, or are they independent parallel collections? To the present reviewer the latter view has always seemed more probable on general principles; but the relationship between the two Davidic psalters is further complicated by the fact that Psalm 16 is found, as Psalm 53, in an elohistic redaction—a positive proof that in the elohistic psalms we are dealing with a distinct psalter.

It will be seen from the above that the doxologies at the end of Books I, II, and III indicate correct critical divisions of the Psalter. The case is different with Ps. 106 48, the final doxology of Book IV. It is admitted on all hands that this division is critically unsound. Psalms 105–107 form a very closely connected group of psalms. Their separation by the doxology into different books is unfortunate, and the division evidently artificial. Books IV–V are therefore generally regarded as in reality making up one collection. Within it, however, the pilgrim psalms (Pss. 120–134) stand out very distinctly and can most probably be regarded as forming a minor psalter.

In the above analysis, which sums up in general outline the evidence for a critical structure of the Psalter as it has been developed in the last twenty-five years, the following collections emerge with distinctness: (1) a Davidic collection constituting Book I; (2) the Davidic collection of Book II (probably originally distinct from the collection of Book I); (3) the Korah and Asaph collections of Books II and III; (4) the elohistic psalter, which represents a combination of the second collection of Davidic psalms with the Korah and Asaph psalms, together with a Korah appendix; (5) a great collection of miscellaneous psalms (Books IV–V); within which (6) the pilgrim psalms stand out as a homogeneous collection, also no doubt originally a minor psalter.

Let us now turn to some illustrations of the way in which Briggs makes use of this material. In the first place, the discussion of the doxologies, which we have seen to be the natural starting-point of the investigation, is deferred to the end of the analysis. This is due to the chronological arrangement of the material. Briggs believes that the doxologies were inserted by the final editor of the Psalter. Hence they are discussed last. Even granting that they are due to the final editor (though this is very much to be doubted in the case of the first three), they have been shown to mark lines of critical cleavage. Hence, if the object is to show how the Psalter should be analyzed into earlier minor psalters, the postponement of all mention of the doxologies to the end of the discussion is most unfortunate; it prevents any use of this first clue to the analysis.

In the next place, the treatment of the elohistic psalter stands

midway in the discussion, after the reader has already had to accept largely on faith the *miktam*, *maskil*, Davidic, Korah, Asaph, and *mizmorim* psalters. The discussion of the elohistic psalter (§ 32) is entirely separated from the discussion of the threefold division of the Psalter (§ 38), with which it would naturally be connected, because the compilation of the elohistic psalter preceded in point of time the present threefold arrangement.[33]

Again, the critical use made of Ps. 72 20 must be regarded as wholly inadequate. It is used only to confirm the supposition of a Davidic psalter (§ 27). It is not used to disintegrate the elohistic psalter into its original elements. One might as well pass a current of electricity through water and say that the result was two parts of hydrogen, with the oxygen totally ignored. The domination of the chronological point of view would again seem to be responsible for this failure to make full use of Ps. 72 20. Each of the groups—Davidic, Korah, and Asaph—is treated by itself in the supposed chronological order of their origin and without reference to the other groups. As Ps. 72 20 is attached to the Davidic group, it is mentioned only in connection with that group, and the indirect bearing which its position gives it upon the separation of the Korah and Asaph groups is not mentioned. Thus the doxologies, the peculiarity of the elohistic psalter, and Ps. 72 20, which, taken together, are the clues to the critical analysis of the Psalter, lose almost all their evidential force through the chronological disposition of the material adopted by Briggs.

But what, then, it may be asked, is the evidence which Briggs adduces in favor of the existence of minor psalters previous to

[33] The threefold division of course implies the artificiality of the doxology at the end of Book IV (Ps. 106 48). But in discussing the threefold division, nothing is said as to this implication. The artificiality of the doxology as the closing doxology of Book IV is, indeed, implied at § 35, where the attempt is made to show that there was a *hallel* psalter, and at § 40, where the connection of Ps. 106 48 with 1 Chron. 16 36 is discussed. But the bearing of Briggs's view of this doxology upon the book divisions is not brought out where we should expect it to be. Briggs further holds that this doxology was arbitrarily inserted by the final editor. This is by no means so probable as the view that the doxology originally belonged to the psalm, and that the unfortunate division into books was made at this point because the doxology already stood here.

our present Psalter? Strictly speaking, none whatever. Let me not be misunderstood. I do not mean to convey the impression that no facts which might have been used as evidence are mentioned. I only mean that their evidential value is not pointed out. The nearest approach to an argument for a minor psalter is found in § 27, which treats of the Davidic psalter. Briggs starts from the phrase in the title of these psalms *le-david*, ambiguously translated in the Revised Version, "*Of David.*" Until comparatively recent times it has been commonly held that the preposition *le* denoted authorship, and was to be translated "by." Briggs departs from this traditional view, saying:

> The *le* is not the *le* of authorship, as has generally been supposed. The earliest collection of Pss. for use in the synagogue was made under the name of David, the traditional father of religious poetry and of the temple worship. The later editors left this name in the titles, with the preposition *le* attached, to indicate that these Psalms belonged to that collection. This explains all the facts of the case and the position of these Pss. in the Psalter. This view is confirmed by Ps. 72 20, which states that this Ps. was the conclusion of the prayers of David, and implies that the collection was a prayer-book.

The argument of this paragraph would seem to be that the preposition *le* implied a Davidic psalter, and that this is confirmed by Ps. 72 20. But this begs the whole question. The correctness of the interpretation of the *le* is assumed, not proved. Briggs's view of its meaning is a favorite one at the present time, and may be correct, but it is distinctly debatable, and has a number of weighty arguments against it. One of the objections to the assumed interpretation of *le* is found in the very passage cited in its support, Ps. 72 20. The editor who appended this note must certainly have thought that David was the author of the preceding psalms. But if so, the title *le-david* must already have stood at the head either of each psalm or of the collection, and must have been understood to imply authorship. As this editorial note would seem to be regarded by Briggs (and quite correctly) as appended to the original Davidic collection, it indicates that the theory of the meaning of *le* which he rejects existed as early as the first stages in the evolution of the Psalter. Since Briggs's interpretation of the *le* plays so large a part in his theory of the Psalter,

surely it ought to have been exegetically and linguistically justified, and not simply assumed.[34]

Whether the phrase *lamenaṣṣeḥ* usually translated, "For the chief musician," indicates a director's psalter, is again a debatable question. The statement is simply made that the *le* has the same meaning in this phrase which Briggs assigns to it in the phrase *le-david*. But whether the *le* in these psalm-titles always has the same significance is just the problem which requires discussion. When, for example, in the title to Ps. 51 we find both phrases, *lamenaṣṣeḥ*, *le-david*, the question presses as to whether we have a right to interpret *le* both times in the same way. What we want is proof, not assumption. Yet it is not impossible that there really may have been a director's psalter, and this theory was also advocated by Beer. One piece of evidence for it is found in the fact that the obscure musical or liturgical directions are only found in these director-psalms, though they by no means occur in all of them. Briggs notices this fact, but as usual fails to point out its evidential force. So far as the *miktam*, *maskil*, *mizmor*, and *hallel* psalms are concerned, where the preposition *le* does not appear, no attempt whatever is made to prove that they once formed independent collections. It is simply asserted that they did so. There is a possibility that the *hallel* psalms which appear in certain groups in Book V may have formed a psalter, but the contrast

[34] When it is said in the above citation that the meaning of the *le* adopted "explains all the facts of the case and the position of these Pss. in the Psalter," we have an instance of one of those sovereign dicta which are altogether too frequent in this commentary, and whose effect is irritating rather than reassuring. In this connection it may be noted that from the theory that the *le* does not imply authorship the conclusion is reached that all the psalms are anonymous except Psalms 72, 88, 89, 90, and (strangely enough) 102. These are all held to be pseudonymous. Even in the thirteen cases where historical notices are attached to the title *le-david*, it is denied that the editor understood the *le* of authorship, on the ground that "it is altogether improbable . . . that an editor of the middle Persian period could have thought that his references to experiences of David were historical." Briggs's theory is that by means of these historical notices the editor simply wished to illustrate the psalms, and not to express an opinion as to their author, a theory already tentatively suggested by Beer (Individual- und Gemeinde-Psalmen, p. lxxxviii), but which is distinctly improbable in view of the strong Davidic tradition which is known to have existed at the time when most of the psalms were composed (cf. the Chronicler).

with the very clearly defined pilgrim songs in the same book rather suggests the opposite view. The *miktam* psalms also form a little group (Pss. 16, 56–60); but there is no critical reason, apart from the fact that they stand together, for holding that they formed an independent collection. The *maskilim* are, to be sure, mainly concentrated in Books II–III (eleven out of the thirteen *maskilim* are found in these two books), but they are scattered through these books in a haphazard manner, while the *mizmorim* are shuffled through all the five books in a way that is now wholly unintelligible. There are no critical indications of psalters in the case of these psalms, which are not even clearly grouped, and the question presses whether in these cases Briggs is not following phantom psalters.

At this point we meet with another of Briggs's assumptions. The objection just raised, drawn from the unmethodical distribution of the psalms in the psalters, is met by the assumption that all the psalms which had a common element in their titles once stood together, and that their present distribution through the Psalter is due to various revisions. So far as I have been able to observe, no evidence for this view is offered, and the unorganized character of the *maskilim*, *mizmorim*, and even the *hallel* psalms, where there are no critical evidences for the existence of independent psalters, as contrasted with the Davidic, Asaph, and Korah psalms, where there are such evidences, makes strongly against the theory. When the same theory is applied to the Korah and Davidic psalms, it is equally gratuitous. Briggs assumes that the elohistic Korah-psalms and the Jahvistic Korah-psalms once stood together, but that the present position of the Jahvistic Korah-group (Pss. 84–89) was due to the final redactor. Why all the Korah psalms were not adopted into the elohistic psalter, if they once stood together, he does not tell us.[35] In the same way, he assumes that the Davidic Jahveh group of Book I and the Davidic Elohim group of Book II once stood together, though it is again difficult to see why only a part of the Davidic psalms were selected from the original psalter for elo-

[35] We have seen that the greater probability is that the two groups of psalms had a different literary history, and that the Jahveh group was an appendix to the Elohim psalter, not an insertion by the final editor.

histic redaction.[36] He further assumes that the Davidic psalms of Books III–IV also stood in the same general collection, and therefore transfers them in imagination to a place before the editorial note, Ps. 72 20. This procedure would of course overturn the argument advanced above from this note, that the Davidic psalms in the later books were unknown to the editor who was responsible for Ps. 72 20; but at the same time it calmly ignores what has usually been held to be one of the best clews to a true analysis of the Psalter. As a matter of fact, as we shall see, Briggs himself distinguishes certain Davidic psalms in Book V from the other Davidic psalms in the later books, and denies that they stood in the original Davidic psalter.[37]

If a true presentation of Briggs's method of discussion has been given thus far, it is clear that the student who wishes to find any formal justification of the critical analysis advocated in the commentary will be disappointed. Briefly stated, the argument can be reduced to the following: In the titles to a number of psalms the name of David occurs. Therefore there was a Davidic psalter. In another series of psalms *mizmor* is found in the title. Therefore there was a *mizmor* collection. Sometimes both the name of David and *mizmor* occur in the same title; in such cases the editor of the *mizmor* psalter took over the psalm from the Davidic psalter. If, in addition to *le-david* and *mizmor* the phrase

[36] The fact that Psalm 16 appears, as Psalm 53, in an elohistic redaction, and the bearing of this upon the right to assume an independent elohistic psalter, is not even referred to in the chapter on Higher Criticism, though it is noted in the chapter on the Text. This omission shows how oblivious our author is of the necessity of first proving the existence of independent minor psalters in the present compilation.

[37] Much labor is given to the establishment of the supposed original order of the Davidic Psalms (p. lxiv), but the results are far from convincing, and do not seem to throw any light either upon the critical analysis of the Psalter or upon the interpretation of the psalms. It may also be noted that Psalm 50 is supposed to have originally stood with the other Asaph psalms (Psalms 73–83). This is possible; its present position is at first sight anomalous. It is variously explained by our author as due to the desire of an editor "to make an appropriate concluding Ps. to the first division of 50" (p. lxvi), and as "giving an appropriate liturgical close [in what respect is Psalm 50 liturgical?] to this [Korah] group before the penitential Psalm 51" (p. lxxii). The propriety of the word "appropriate" in these citations may be questioned. The real reason for the present position of the psalm would seem to be its topical connection with the present form of Psalm 51. Both psalms are anti-sacrificial.

lamenaṣṣeḥ is found, this means that the psalm was first in the Davidic, then in the *mizmor*, and finally in the director's psalter (cf. Psalm 62), and so on indefinitely. All this is stated as if it were self-evident; no proof is given for the theory advocated. The discussion is so formulated as to show, not that there were original minor psalters behind our present Psalter, but, such psalters being assumed, their chronological relationships are stated, and thus is indicated the growth of the present Psalter from its first beginnings to its final form.

The criticism thus far made has been upon this chronological method of approach. This method does not allow the evidence for the existence of previous psalters to be marshalled in any adequate way. But has not our criticism after all been somewhat captious? Is it fair to judge a writer by what he does not set out to do, rather than by what he actually undertakes? Briggs sets out to show what he believes to be the chronological stages of the growth of the Psalter. This he does very clearly. The reader can easily follow the orderly sequence, *miktamim*, *maskilim*, David, Korah, Asaph, *mizmorim*, and the rest. May not the advantages of this method of presenting the subject, by which the student is enabled to grasp without difficulty the theory propounded, compensate for the disadvantages which have been noted?

But even if we thus consider this chronological mode of treatment simply on its positive side, and judge it by what it does do and not by what it fails to do, we immediately encounter a grave difficulty. Turn again to the title of Psalm 62. The three elements in this title are chief-musician, *mizmor*, David, arranged in this order. On Briggs's theory of the titles these represent three minor psalters. But this order is not the chronological order of the psalters. Briggs adopts the order David, *mizmor*, director. What are the principles upon which he bases his view of the chronological relationship of the various psalters?

It is noteworthy that only once in Briggs's entire discussion does he make use of any external evidence. In discussing, namely, the date of the director's psalter, he refers to the fact that the term *lamenaṣṣeḥ* is found again in Habakkuk 3 19. This,

he says, was taken from the director's psalter, though he gives no proof of this statement. Hence Habakkuk 3 is subsequent to the director. But since the prophetic canon was closed by the time of Ben Sira (219–198 B.C.), therefore the director's psalter also must have been composed before this time, that is, in the middle Greek period.

This almost total neglect of the external evidence in determining the date of the Psalter is in the present reviewer's estimation a very serious omission.[38] The formula for the use of internal evidences of date is a simple one: the date of the latest psalm in an assumed collection is the *terminus ad quem* of the compilation of that collection.

But at this point a new difficulty emerges. The Davidic psalter is held to have been closed in the late Persian period, because on grounds of internal evidence no Davidic psalms were composed later than this period. But there are psalms with *le-david* in their titles which are assigned by Briggs himself, again on the basis of internal evidence, to the Greek period. How is this contradiction avoided? By supposing that the Davidic titles in the Greek psalms are not genuine old titles. Attention is also called in this connection to the tendency present in later times, as is evidenced by the versions, to ascribe psalms to David. Now if evidence independent of the internal criteria of the psalms themselves had been advanced for the completion of the Davidic psalter in the Persian period, it would perhaps be legitimate to exclude psalms of the Greek period from the original Davidic psalter of the Persian period. But if the dates of the minor psalters are regularly determined by the dates of the latest psalms in them, it seems distinctly fallacious, to put it very mildly, to assign the Davidic psalter to the Persian period in spite of the fact that some psalms with Davidic titles admittedly date from the Greek period.

The entire theory of the evolution of the Psalter as elaborated

[38] It is not treated even in the section on Canonicity, where the omission of any reference to external evidence is even more striking. The whole section on Canonicity is, it may be remarked, rather elementary, and is mainly taken up with a defence of the imprecatory psalms. The discussion seems to move upon the old assumption that the canonicity of a Biblical book can be vindicated by means of its religious, doctrinal, and ethical contents.

in the introduction thus turns out to be built exclusively upon the criticism of the individual psalms which compose the several subsidiary collections. But, unfortunately, the discussion of the dates of the psalms is rigorously excluded from the introduction. Only the tabular results of the conclusions reached in the body of the commentary are presented. It is a pity that the reader could not have been apprised at the outset of some of the general landmarks by which the attempt is made to date the psalms in the ensuing detailed discussions. If only a few words could have been said, for example, on the relation of the Psalter to the Law or to Second Isaiah or to Job, to the development of Individualism or ethical monotheism, if it could have been shown toward which of the two poles, to the JE narratives of Genesis or to Chronicles, the Psalter inclines, the student could have formed some idea of what to expect in the following pages. As it is, he must plunge unprepared into the swollen stream of detailed criticism that flows through the nine hundred and sixty-seven pages of the commentary proper. It must be said that the very important section on the Higher Criticism of the Psalter is thoroughly unsatisfactory. The method of presentation adopted results in a complete disorganization of the proofs of the evolution of the Psalter in the interest of a formally clear presentation of the assumed chronological stages of evolution. But when the chronological theory thus propounded is examined, it is found to be based on a mechanical principle, which the author himself does not always adhere to, and for proof of which the reader is referred to the body of the commentary. The process is nothing short of bewildering to one who is not already acquainted with the criticism of the Psalter, while to one who is acquainted with this the result carries no conviction.

With regard to Briggs's actual theory of the dates of the psalms, only the results of his investigation and one or two tests of his method can be here given.

Briggs assigns seven psalms to the early monarchy before Jehoshaphat, seven to the middle monarchy, thirteen to the late monarchy (altogether twenty-seven pre-exilic psalms, a goodly proportion as modern critics go), thirteen to the exile, thirty-three to the early Persian period, sixteen to the times of Nehe-

miah, eleven to the late Persian period, fourteen to the early Greek period, forty-one to the later Greek period, and eight to the period of the Maccabees. These results seem precise. But for that very reason they awaken suspicion; can the psalms be so accurately distributed over all these centuries of development? This suspicion is strengthened when one observes that the *miktam* psalms (Pss. 16, 56–60) are distributed over several centuries. If any group of psalms bear on their face the marks of homogeneity, it is these. Duhm assigns Psalms 56–59 tentatively to one author, certainly to the same period.

The attitude which a commentator assumes toward the question of Maccabean and pre-exilic psalms is one of the surest touchstones of his critical ability. On the one hand, the fact that only eight Maccabean psalms (Pss. 33, 102b, 109b, 118, 139c, 147, 149, 129) are accepted represents a wholesome and timely reaction against Duhm and his followers, who would bring the larger part of the Psalter down to the Maccabean period, and much of it to the latter part of the period. On the other hand, the assignment of twenty-seven psalms to the pre-exilic period, and seven of these (Pss. 7, 13, 18, 23, 24b, 60a, and 110) to the very early monarchy, is most precarious. A few illustrations of the method of dating these earlier psalms will show what weight is to be attached to some, at least, of Briggs's conclusions. On Psalm 7, which the conservative Baethgen assigns to the Persian period and Duhm to a very late period, Briggs observes that there is nothing to prevent its being as early as David. In this particular case his judgment seems to be somewhat influenced by the title, though in general he rejects the titles as authoritative. Regarding Psalm 13, which Baethgen and Duhm make no attempt to date exactly but which is closely related to the other psalms of persecution or martyrdom in Book I, it is stated that there is no internal evidence against a date as early as David, and the claim is actually made that "the author of 2 Sam. 1 19–27 might have written it." The attempt to fix the date of Psalm 23 must be regarded as a peculiarly striking instance of ineffective argument. "The language and syntax of the Ps.," says Dr. Briggs, "and all its ideals are early. There is not the slightest trace of anything that is post-deuteronomic. The his-

torical circumstances of the poet must have been peaceful and prosperous." On the basis of this characterization of the psalm, the possibility of its composition in the prosperous Greek or late Persian periods is denied. The exile and early restoration are ruled out because they are times of sorrow and because the singer is able to resort to the temple.[39] The reference to the temple also rules out David, and properly so. The troubled times of the Assyrian and Babylonian periods are dismissed for the same reason as the exile. Hence the psalm is assigned to "an earlier and simpler period, the days of the early monarchy, not earlier than Solomon, or later than Jehoshaphat." So far as the language of the psalm is concerned, this does not prevent Baethgen from assigning it to the post-exilic period or Duhm from regarding it as Maccabean. Apart from the argument from language, is it really to be supposed that no pious Israelite or Jew could have spoken with the quiet confidence of this psalm except in the period between Solomon and Jehoshaphat? As to its ideals, Briggs expressly admits that "the three figures, shepherd, guide, host, are all simple, natural, and characteristic of the life in Jerusalem and its vicinity at any period in Biblical history." As a matter of fact the figure of the shepherd is especially prominent in Second Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and might suggest that the psalm was subsequent to these writers. That a psalm of only six verses should be dated before Deuteronomy because it lacks any post-deuteronomic characteristics, is surely a most fragile argument from silence. In fact Psalm 23 cannot be dated by itself alone. The only safe method of procedure is to attempt to fix the approximate date of the group of psalms with which it is most naturally associated.[40] These illustrations do not awaken much confidence in the principles of historical criticism underlying them, and doubt becomes despair when we find Psalm 110 tentatively brought into connection with the victory of Jehoshaphat recounted in 2 Chron. 20. Moreover, many of Briggs's results are only obtained by the assumption of more or

[39] The reading of the LXX at vs. 6b is adopted, cf. R. V.

[40] Psalm 23 is very closely related to Psalm 27, so closely in fact that it is not impossible that they had a common author (cf. Duhm). But Briggs ascribes Psalm 27 to the middle monarchy.

less extensive glosses or accretions.[41] Psalms which in their present form are shown either by language or by religious and other ideas to be late, may be dated earlier if these modernisms can be eliminated as glosses. The assumption of the possibility of glosses is theoretically entirely legitimate. Hymns are notoriously tinkered with, and it can be demonstrated in the case of the duplicate psalms that the hymns of the Psalter are no exception. The question is whether the glosses and accretions can be successfully detected. It is at this point that we touch Briggs's metrical analyses of the psalms. It is poetical considerations, metre and strophical arrangement, that are most often used as clues to the detection of glosses. It will therefore be necessary to turn our attention for a few moments to the next great problem which confronts us in the Psalter, the problem of Hebrew poetry.

Hebrew metrics forms one of the most technical and most vexed questions in Old Testament study. Briggs has been for a generation a valiant champion of the existence of Hebrew metre, and has contributed perhaps more than any other American scholar to the advancement of this particular subject. It has been more and more recognized that in Hebrew poetry we have on *a priori* grounds every right to expect some sort of a metrical system. The difficulty has been to determine what are the exact principles of that system. Briggs long ago adopted the principles of the German scholar, Julius Ley, in which the accents or tone-syllables are laid at the foundation of Hebrew metre, and he has lived to see these principles, which were at first regarded with great skepticism, adopted by a steadily increasing number of scholars. Yet there is a weakness in the so-called accentual system of Ley and Briggs. If accents or tones alone are counted, we do not get any real metre. This defect was pointed out by Sievers, who insisted that the falls and pauses, as well as the accents or rises, must be counted in. Ley himself, in articles published since his death in 1901, seems finally to have

[41] So, in the case of Psalm 110 just cited, and most notably in the case of Psalm 18. The two other parts of psalms assigned to the early monarchy, Ps. 24 7 ff. and 60 6 ff. have perhaps a more defensible claim to antiquity than those which have been noticed.

recognized this defect, but Briggs seems to be still skeptical of the value of Sievers's supplement to Ley's system (p. xli).

Our author does not go into the technicalities of this subject beyond giving a few general rules for counting the tones.[42] He holds that there are four measures in the Psalms: trimeters or three-toned lines (these being the most frequent), tetrameters, pentameters (a measure particularly investigated by Budde, and with great success), and hexameters. The existence of two-toned lines is denied (against Duhm). All the psalms are stretched or contracted to fit these measures.

Briggs also holds to a strophical arrangement of most of the psalms. The strophes are primarily determined "by a more decided separation in the thought of the poem," and by noting the relationships of the several poetical parallelisms. In other words, while the metre of the different lines is closely connected with textual criticism, the determination of the strophe is intimately allied with exegesis.

The present reviewer cannot claim to be an expert in the department of Hebrew metres; his judgments are those of a layman. But his impressions are that a very large amount of truth must be admitted in Briggs's metrical system. Many of the psalms lend themselves with but little emendation to a consistent metrical scheme. In many the emendations which are supported, independently of the metre, by purely text-critical or exegetical considerations enable the student to recover the strophical analysis, and therewith restore the original beauty and meaning of the psalm. In such cases the result justifies the process. In seeing the psalm assume shape and color the student finds the same pleasure which a critic of paintings might take in watching the gradual restoration of an old masterpiece of which the lines and colors had become confused and dulled by the grime of ages. The exegetical and aesthetic value of such successful restorations can scarcely be overestimated. But there are a large number of instances in which it does not seem as if the accentual system

[42] For instance, monosyllabic words are not usually to be accented. Words of four or more syllables have a secondary accent, which is counted in the measure. The insertion of the conjunction *ve* before a monosyllable will justify giving to the latter the force of a tone.

or any other had as yet solved the metrical problem, and in which the strophical arrangement is correspondingly obscure. The hammering and sawing of the lines which at times Briggs finds necessary in order to bring his metres into accord, makes such a tremendous din that the music of the reconstructed psalm is fairly drowned out.[43]

What Smend says in reference to the interpretation of the psalms generally has a particular application to their metrical reconstruction and strophical analysis: "Every expert knows that many a psalm is like a fortress which defies a regular siege and can only be conquered by a lucky chance." In the present uncertainty in the field of Hebrew metre successful restorations or emendations depend more on deftness of exegesis, soundness of judgment in textual criticism, and poetic divination than on the system of metre adopted. In the two illustrations which I shall give of Briggs's poetical analyses, the criticisms will be made from the exegetical point of view. In the one case his siege-works seem to me to have utterly failed to reduce the fortress. In the other he has captured it with brilliant success.

Psalm 18 has always been a touchstone of the commentator's principles of historical criticism and of his exegetical tact. Upon it all those fall back who wish to defend the Davidic authorship of any of the psalms. At the present time no scholar who has been at all influenced by historical criticism will undertake to defend the psalm as it stands. Those who defend its Davidic authorship can only do so at the expense of its integrity. This is the course adopted by Briggs. The psalm is Davidic, but only after all that in his judgment is non-davidic has been eliminated. The question is whether these eliminations can be exegetically and text-critically justified. By the battering-rams of metre and strophe Briggs proposes to break through the outer bastions and get back to the old Davidic wall.

The metre of the psalm is the trimeter, and forms one of the most obvious examples of this measure to be found anywhere. It is in general so clear and consistent that departures from it

[43] As an example, note the carpentry-work that must be done on the *miktam* psalms. Psalm 59 has practically to be rewritten in order to bring it into a metrical scheme. Whether the result is poetry is another question.

at once arouse suspicion. In the majority of the emendations necessary to preserve the metre, considerations of textual criticism and exegesis enable us to cut out intruding elements with considerable assurance.[44] But these metrical emendations have little direct bearing upon Briggs's reconstruction of the psalm, except as they affect the structure of the strophes. It is the strophical analysis which is made the basis of Briggs's critical process.

We have seen that the strophical analysis depends primarily upon the understanding of the course of thought in the poem. In Psalm 18 there are two very clearly marked divisions: Part I, vss. 1–26, and Part II, vss. 32–50. Part I describes the deliverance of the singer from some great danger; the description is highly figurative and the precise nature of the danger is not revealed. Part II treats of the equipment for war of the singer by his God and his complete triumph over his enemies; the theme of Part II recalls Homer. Between these two sharply distinguished parts stands the obscure passage vss. 27–31.

If we examine Part I more attentively, it is found to break up into three clearly marked sections: (1) vss. 1–3, gratitude to God for deliverance; (2) vss. 4–19, the description of the singer's danger (very rhetorical and ornate); (3) vss. 20–26, the religious and ethical significance of the deliverance. This last section is an amplification of the closing thought of the second section (vs. 19b). In Part II the equipment of the warrior, his pursuit of the enemy, his triumph, and thanksgiving for victory follow in natural order; the whole, however, is woven more closely together, so that the transitions of thought are not quite so distinct as in Part I.

Is it possible to take one further step and discover a strophical analysis which will coincide with the logical analysis just made? If the student will turn to the second section of Part I (vss. 4–19), and read vss. 4, 5; vs. 6; vss. 9, 10; vss. 11, 12; vss. 13, 14 (omitting 13c, with LXX, as an accidental repetition of vs. 12b); vs. 15; vss. 16, 17; and vss. 18, 19, he will find that the subordinate divisions of the section naturally make little stanzas of four

[44] In the case of Psalm 18 we are happily in possession of four different recensions, Psalm 18, 2 Sam. 22, and the translation of both in the LXX.

lines each (quatrains). Only at vss. 7, 8, is this regular scheme interrupted. In these verses we have six lines; and it is not at all impossible that originally there was a quatrain here also.[45] Again, if the third section (vss. 20–26) be examined, and the reader count backward from the very perfect final quatrain (vss. 25, 26), it will be seen that vss. 23, 24, and 21, 22, will also give two excellent quatrains (the symmetry is still more evident in the Hebrew). This, to be sure, leaves vs. 20 hanging in the air; but vs. 20 is almost an exact duplicate of vs. 24, and may safely be rejected altogether. With the elimination of this verse the division into quatrains in vss. 4–26 becomes the most obvious division; and when it is once observed, it is also exegetically illuminating. The thoughts of the psalm are now seen to be chiselled out with great care, and their outlines are sharp and distinct. In the introductory section (vss. 1–3) we do not find the quatrain which we certainly should expect there; but a comparison with 2 Sam. 22 2–4 again shows that the text of the section is greatly corrupted, and the conjecture is entirely proper that it originally harmonized strophically with what follows.[46] In passing, the completeness of Part I, taken by itself, should be noticed. It is a rounded whole, composed with much artistic skill.

Now let us turn to Part II (vss. 32–50). If for the moment we omit vs. 32 from our reckoning and examine vss. 33–42, a beautiful quatrain division can be recognized: vss. 33–34, God's training of the feet and hands (participial construction in the Hebrew); vss. 35, 36, God's further equipment of the hero (second person; vs. 35 is admittedly corrupted and one line must be omitted, cf. 2 Sam. 22 36); vss. 37, 38, the warrior's pursuit (first person); vss. 39, 40, God's assistance in the pursuit (second person again; vs. 40b probably to be emended to second person with LXX [codices A and B] and Jerome); vss. 41, 42. With

[45] In the Hebrew there is metrical difficulty also at vss. 11, 12. But the text at this point is notoriously corrupt, as its inherent difficulties and a comparison with 2 Sam. 22 12, 13, testify.

[46] Whether the exact wording of the introduction can be recovered is another question. Emendations thus far proposed are not very convincing. Duhm's suggestion that there were originally eight lines (two quatrains) here would seem to be in the right direction.

the extra line omitted at vs. 35, for which there is warrant on other grounds, nothing could be more smooth, regular, and obvious than the division into quatrains in vss. 33–42. Yet this arrangement leaves vs. 32 hanging in the air just as the obvious arrangement of vss. 21–26 left vs. 20. But, curiously enough, just as vs. 20 was seen to be a duplicate of vs. 24, so vs. 32a is a duplicate of vs. 39a. Further, the thought and phraseology of vs. 32b are in well-marked antithesis to vs. 30a, that is, to a verse which we shall find to be a very suspicious element in a very suspicious passage. There is therefore good critical warrant for suspecting that vs. 32, at least in its present form, is not to be taken with what follows, although its thought is in keeping with the succeeding verses.

The strophical arrangement of vss. 43–50 presents considerable difficulties, which cannot be overcome without resort to the knife. The verses fall into two clearly marked sections: vss. 43–45 and vss. 46–50. If quatrains are found, they must agree with this division into sections, and the sections themselves be kept strophically distinct. In the case of vss. 43–45, verses 44 and 45 give a good quatrain; while vs. 43 contains only three lines. Is there any way to recover the missing line? To answer, we must turn to the other section.

In vss. 46–50, verses 46 and 47 will give a quatrain. Verse 49 is exegetically suspicious, for its spirit is wholly inconsistent with the context. In the context the speaker is distinctly hostile to the nations. Verse 49 is animated by benevolence toward the nations. Further, verses 48 and 50 are closely connected in the Hebrew by their grammatical construction. Those two facts suggest that vs. 49 is an interpolation. But even if verse 49 is eliminated, six lines still remain, whereas only four are desired. Accordingly, the suggestion has been made that the extra line at vs. 48 (either 48b or 48c) should be transposed to a place after vs. 43a, where it would fit admirably. The only other line that can be lopped off is vs. 50c; and there is justification for rejecting it, for this clause may well be an interpretative gloss by some editor who thought that David was the author of the psalm. Critically, this clause is on a level with the title.

The arrangement here suggested for vss. 43–50 is of course con-

jectural. Yet each step of the process has its own good reason, and the result is attractive, even if not entirely convincing. Part II of the psalm thus falls into a consistent series of quatrains, which, as in Part I, correspond admirably to the thought. But we cannot call Part II a consistent *whole* like Part I. It cannot originally have begun with vs. 33. The introduction must therefore be found in vss. 27–32, or else we must suppose it to be lost.

This leads us to the consideration of vss. 27–31 (32). These verses are exegetically unintelligible, and strophically impossible. Verse 31 is a formulation of the doctrine of monotheism in no organic connection with the context, which, whether we look at Part I or Part II, treats of God's relation to the singer, not of what God is in himself. Verse 30 might be regarded as a generalization based on the singer's experience, though why "the *word* of Jahveh" should be emphasized in Psalm 18 does not appear, and it is suspicious that clauses b and c are also found in Prov. 30 5. Moreover, difficulty has always been found with the text and the relation of vss. 27 and 28 (cf. 2 Sam. 22 28, 29). Verse 27 tells what God does for an afflicted people; vs. 28 what he does for the speaker. In what relation do these two thoughts stand? Again, vss. 27, 28, taken together, seem to be an application of the ethical principles embodied in vss. 21–26; but such an application is entirely unexpected and unnecessary, since vss. 20–26, as we have seen, fully explain what goes before. Verses 27, 28, thus form a sort of limping appendix. Of all these verses only vs. 29 seems in its picturesque concreteness to have any connection with Part II. Strophically also, this passage is hopeless. Verses 27, 28, might form a quatrain, if we could suppose that the speaker identified himself with the afflicted people; but vs. 29 is an isolated couplet, vs. 30 a three-line stanza, and vs. 31 a tetrameter couplet.

What, then, is the significance of this passage? Observe that vs. 27 unexpectedly refers to "the afflicted people"; vs. 30 is also a generalization (note the plural, "all them that take refuge"); and at vs. 31 we actually meet with the first person plural. Light at once dawns upon the passage if it is interpreted as a bit of liturgical padding inserted between the two main parts

of the psalm. But when this is once recognized, a further consequence is seen to follow. Since the introduction to Part II cannot be found in vss. 27–31 (32), it must be lost, and vs. 29 is probably a fragment of it. Further, when we ask ourselves what is the relation between the two main parts of the psalm, we fail to find any. The last part is usually taken as the interpretation of the first part, but in that case all real progress and movement must be denied to the psalm. We have seen that Part I is a self-consistent and artistically perfect whole, and so is Part II, with the exception of the missing introduction. The subject, spirit, and style of the two parts are entirely different. We have, therefore, two originally distinct psalms, and the liturgical passage vss. 27–31 was inserted when they were united.[47]

Let us now examine the analysis proposed by Briggs.

He also recognizes two parts, but they do not coincide with the two outlined above. His first part is found in vss. 1–19, his second in vss. 27–50. The intervening verses, 20–27, are eliminated, being themselves broken up into two little sections, (*a*) vss. 20–23 (eight lines), a legal gloss from the Persian period; (*b*) vss. 25–27 (eight lines), an ethical gloss from the Greek period. The elimination of these verses would appear to have no exegetical or strophical justification. Exegetically, they attach themselves immediately to vs. 19b, and amplify that clause in a way to round out the whole poem. Strophically, Briggs's view requires that vs. 24 go with what follows it, and vs. 27 with what precedes it. Since vss. 25, 26, form a perfect quatrain, we then have to suppose that it was preceded and followed by a couplet,—a supposition which we have seen to be not only unnecessary but improbable.[48]

The motive for the elimination of these verses is clear. They are, as Briggs says, inconsistent with the Davidic authorship of the psalm, hence they must go out. But another conclusion

[47] There have been many attempts to explain the critical difficulties of this psalm. I have used the scaffolding which others have reared, but I hope to have pointed out the real architectural outlines of Ps. 18 somewhat more clearly than has previously been done.

[48] Why Dr. Briggs should characterize one gloss as legal and Persian, and the other as ethical and Greek, when both begin with exactly the same sentence (vs. 20 = vs. 24), is hard to understand.

would seem to be the more natural one. Verses 20–27 are intimately connected with what precedes; and therefore at least the first part of the psalm cannot be by David. The only way this argument can be met is by showing that vss. 1–19 are so clearly Davidic that the rejection of vss. 20–26 becomes a necessity. Briggs accordingly argues for the primitive character of vss. 1–19, and compares the theophany in these verses to Judges 5. The comparison suggests to me just the opposite view. Verses 1–19 are good poetry, but only in the sense of being good conventionalized poetry; they are too formally correct to be primitive; Part I is in no sense creative. This, however, is a judgment of taste, and as such may or may not have argumentative value.

Briggs further breaks up each of his two parts into three fourteen-line (!) strophes. Without following this analysis into all its details, some of its more conspicuous infelicities may be pointed out. His first strophe of Part I combines vss. 4–6 with vss. 1–3. This is bad, for the description of the distress is then blended with the initial thanksgivings, whereas in reality there is a sharp break between vss. 1–3 and vss. 4 ff. Again, his first strophe of Part II combines vss. 28–32 with vss. 33, 34. This is worse, for the liturgical generalizations of vss. 28–31 should not be combined with the highly concrete and intimate descriptions which begin at vs. 33. But even in the form which Briggs gives to it this first strophe cannot be hewed out without resort to the most improbable suppositions. For example, vs. 30b is rejected while 30c is accepted. Yet both clauses are found together in Prov. 30 5; and why should they be torn apart here? So vs. 31 is admittedly a tetrameter, and admittedly monotheistic and as such out of relation with the context and inconsistent with Davidic authorship. If there was ever a good case for a gloss, one would think it would be found here. But Briggs emends the line into a trimeter, and turns its monotheism into henotheism in the couplet:

> For who is a God (like) Yahweh?
> And who is a Rock (like) our God?

It is difficult to follow such a procedure. Is it really responsible criticism? Furthermore, out of vss. 43–50 Briggs makes one of

his long stanzas. This is accomplished by the elimination, not only of vs. 49, for which there is good reason, but also of vss. 44b and 45. On the other hand, vs. 50c is retained, and thus the necessity of the transposition suggested above is avoided. The greater simplicity of this theory is an advantage, but the propriety of eliminating vss. 44b, 45, rather than vs. 50c, may be doubted, and we have already seen that the division into fourteen-line stanzas has broken down completely at two crucial points. Elsewhere it is so awkward as compared with the division into quatrains that no adequate justification for attempting to find a fourteen-line stanza in vss. 43–50 can be drawn from the fact that the rest of the psalm is so divided. To the present reviewer Briggs's poetical analysis of Psalm 18 appears to have no exegetical basis in the text, but on the contrary is opposed to all the exegetical probabilities of the case. The attempt to save the Davidic authorship by the supposition of glosses and accretions is in the present instance a failure.[49]

It is a pleasure to turn from Briggs's analysis of Psalm 18 to his restoration of Psalm 73. Psalm 73 is one of the greatest of the whole collection; it is the hymn of an original religious genius. In his work upon this psalm we see Briggs's poetical analysis at its best, and we cannot be too grateful to him for the thorough and convincing way in which he has restored to us this masterpiece in all its rugged grandeur.

Psalm 73, like Psalm 18, falls into two parts: Part I, vss. 1–12, the recognition by the poet of the prosperity of the wicked; Part II, vss. 13–28, the effect of this recognition upon the poet's faith. Can these two parts again be broken up into exegetically justified strophical divisions? In the present instance this question is complicated with that of the identification of the speaker. From vs. 1 it might be argued that the "I" of the speaker is collective, and refers to the personified congregation of the godly. On the

[49] The only portion of the psalm which might lay claim to Davidic authorship is Part II. Here there are a number of details which would seem to fit David, or an idealized David, better than any other character in Israel's history, but here language and literary connections (compare vss. 44, 45, with Micah 7 17, especially in the peculiarities of the Hebrew) make the Davidic authorship very dubious, even if the authenticity of this psalm were treated solely by itself and apart from considerations of the growth of the Psalter as a whole.

other hand, an examination of the rest of the psalm would suggest that if there is an individual speaker anywhere in the Psalter, it is here. The feeling in the psalm is poignant and personal to the last degree. Briggs rightly feels this, and accordingly holds that vs. 1 is a liturgical gloss. The strophical analysis will therefore begin with vs. 2. A division into quatrains can be readily followed through the rest of Part I (vss. 2, 3; vss. 4, 5; vss. 6, 7; vss. 8, 9) until we reach vss. 10–12. Here there are two lines too many. Verse 10 is eliminated by Briggs, and on good grounds. The verse is very obscure (it would seem to be promissory); and it interrupts the connection, since vs. 11 naturally tells what the wicked men of vs. 9 say. With vss. 1 and 10 thus eliminated on entirely intelligible grounds,[50] Part I is seen to fall into five quatrains.

In Part II there is an exegetical difficulty. The "for" at vs. 21 does not attach itself readily to what immediately precedes, and would seem rather to refer to vss. 15, 16. Thus the syntax suggests that vss. 17–20 may be an interpolation. The verses contain a description of the final lot of the wicked in terms of the theology of Job's friends. If they are retained, the poet, though cast down by the thought of the present prosperity of the wicked, yet takes comfort in the belief that they will ultimately be punished. After this he is ready to cast himself upon God, vss. 23 ff. But how much the psalm gains in power when vss. 17–20 are omitted! The psalmist realizes the great theological difficulties which the prosperity of the wicked presents, and has no solution for them. All he can do is to make the great venture of faith, and unreservedly trust in God. How the wonderful glow of the living faith, created by the friction of doubt, which finds expression in vss. 23 ff., is chilled into a formal dogma by vss. 17–20! But if these verses are removed, it is probable that vss. 27, 28, are also to be pruned away. In them the same doctrine emerges as in vss. 17–20. Also, the psalm reaches its radiant climax in vss. 21–26: vss. 27, 28, are only embers. It is prob-

[50] Briggs's assumed glosses are not always so convincing. When he says, for example, of Ps. 59 14, "A prosaic editor made the couplet into a prose sentence," one can but ask what the editor's object was in doing this. This sort of explanation that does not explain is found again and again.

able that here again we have liturgical accretions, and the LXX adds still another line, "In the gates of the Daughter of Zion," which indicates that the present end of the psalm, like the beginning (vs. 1), was adapted to congregational use. If vss. 17–20 and 27, 28, be rejected, Part II will also be found to have exactly five quatrains (vss. 13, 14; vss. 15, 16; vss. 21, 22; vss. 23, 24; vss. 25, 26). In this reconstruction the psalm stands out in all its original perfection of form and nobility of thought.

I have thought it more instructive to show the reader in detail in the case of the two important psalms just discussed how Briggs applies his metrical and strophical theories to the restoration of the psalms rather than to make bare reference to a larger number of examples. What is true of his exposition of these psalms is true for the others. In some cases he takes the fortress, in some he fails. The interesting thing to observe is that even an approximately correct theory of Hebrew metre does not guarantee convincing results in criticism. These depend after all very largely upon skilful exegesis and textual criticism. Without these a metrical theory is a dangerous tool, as apt to do damage as to be serviceable. With them a metrical theory can often be used with excellent effect when other tools fail.

It will be interesting, therefore, to look at Briggs's treatment of questions which are fundamentally exegetical rather than historical or critical. For this purpose I have selected his discussion of certain typical "I-psalms," because, while criticism often enters into this discussion, yet in the main the definition of the "I" is a distinctively exegetical question; and it is here that the exegetical skill of a commentator can most readily be discerned.

It will be well at the outset to give a brief sketch of the history of this problem, and to indicate its signal importance. The tendency to explain the "I" collectively of the Jewish people is already to be seen in the Septuagint, for instance in the title of Psalm 56. The Targum interprets in this way Psalms 23, 38, 56, and 88. In the Talmud the problem was clearly formulated: "R. Eliezer says: David spoke all the psalms in his own interest; R. Joshua thinks: In the interest of the congregation. The Wise on the other hand explain: He spoke some in his own interest,

some in the interest of the congregation." [51] The church fathers, notably Theodore of Mopsuestia, at times adopted the collective theory, and the great Jewish commentators of the Middle Ages maintained it, although in varying degrees. On the other hand, Calvin, an exegete greater than them all, interpreted the "I" individualistically, no doubt because of his hostility to everything that savored of the allegorical method of exegesis. But it was reserved for the nineteenth century to discuss the problem of the exact identification of the speaker in the Psalms at length and in all its bearings. Only then did the fundamental significance of the problem for the interpretation of the Psalter fully reveal itself. Passing over Olshausen's commentary on the Psalms (1853), in which the Psalter was regarded as the song-book of the Second Temple, and the Psalms treated as hymns primarily designed for public worship, the "I" being therefore collective, attention must be called to the epoch-making essay of Smend, "Über das Ich in den Psalmen" in the *Zeitschrift für alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* (1888). Since the appearance of this paper, and largely because of it, an extensive literature on the subject has developed. The monographs of Beer (1894) and Coblenz (1897), already mentioned, and the discussion of the subject in Cheyne's *Historical Origin and Religious Ideas of the Psalter* (1891), are among the main contributions; but since Smend's essay every Old Testament scholar has had to define his own attitude toward the problem. How far-reaching this exegetical question may become may be briefly illustrated.

(1) Smend argues on *a priori* grounds that the "I" of the Psalter must be collective, because the Psalter is a temple hymn-book. But was it so? At least, was it *only* a temple hymn-book? Briggs holds that it was used in the synagogue also; Duhm believes that it was designed for private as well as public devotion. The so-called "anti-sacrificial psalms" certainly do not favor the idea of exclusive use in the temple service. The identification of the "I" is thus closely related to the question of the

[51] Cited from Coblenz, Über das betende Ich in den Psalmen, p. 2. [Coblenz has not quoted the whole passage; it continues: "Those which are expressed in the singular number refer to himself, those in the plural to the community" (Pesahim 117 a).—Ed.]

purpose of the Psalter, and so we are led into a new series of problems.

(2) In by far the largest number of the "I-psalms" the speaker is surrounded by enemies. Who are these enemies? Are they private enemies of a private individual, or public enemies of a public individual, or the public enemies, whether foreign or domestic, of the community? Have we, that is, in these psalms reflections of private quarrels, or of wars, or of party contests? It will readily be seen what importance the answer to these questions may have for the dating of these psalms.

(3) If the speaker should prove to be a collective person, the religion of the speaker is the religion of the community. Then, since the religion of the Psalter is in general of the same type throughout, the natural inference is that the psalms originated in the same general period, and a community-religion of that type can only be understood in the conditions of the post-exilic period. The identification of the "I" is thus brought, as Smend expressly urges, into direct connection with the dating of the psalms.

(4) The ethics of the Psalms assumes a very different complexion according as the "I" is interpreted individualistically or collectively. The difficulties of the imprecatory psalms, for example, are relieved, even if not altogether removed, if it is held that the curses are not expressions of individual hatred against other individuals but rather of community feeling against other parties or nations. Community hatred may be very bitter, and yet be coupled at times with generous consideration for individuals of the opposite party; and thus the fierceness of these psalms may not always represent personal hatred.

(5) The same question enters in a crucial way into some of our judgments upon the religious significance of the Psalter. For example, under the individualistic interpretation Ps. 16 10, 11, probably refers to personal immortality. On the collective interpretation it refers only to the preservation of the community. Again, under the individualistic interpretation, the sense of sin in Psalm 51 would be a sense of personal sin, and would approximate to the Pauline conception. On the collective theory it would be the confession of the sin of the community.

(6) Finally, the interpretation of the "I" is of great importance for the proper interpretation of the Messianic passages in the Psalter. On the usual patristic theory it is Christ himself who speaks in the Psalms. Thus Psalm 22 becomes a direct description by Christ himself of his own passion. On the collective theory such an interpretation of Psalm 22 is impossible. On the other hand, passages which would have no messianic significance under the individualistic interpretation may acquire such significance under the collective view. The confidence expressed in Psalm 6, if the speaker is Israel, is a confidence in the messianic future. On the individualistic interpretation there is no messianic reference whatever in this psalm.

It will be seen that the problem of the identification of the "I" is really the fundamental exegetical problem in the great majority of the Psalms. Does this problem stand out clearly in our present commentary? Far from it. In the introduction no allusion is made to it. Even in the section on Interpretation it is not mentioned, though this would have been a fitting place for some information upon the subject. The student stumbles upon the problem for the first time at Psalm 5, in which the "I" is interpreted collectively by Briggs. The omission of any preliminary discussion of so important a topic puts the student at a serious disadvantage. Not even when Briggs comes to the detailed exposition of the "I-psalms" in the commentary does he make good the omission by enlarging upon the subject. At Psalm 5, where the question of the identification of the "I" is first raised, the collective theory which is adopted is not proved, but is simply assumed. Inasmuch as there are no very clear individualizing traits in the psalm apart from the use of the first person, this might be allowed to pass, but when we come to Psalm 6 and its kindred "invalid psalms" (Psalms 38, 41, 22, 30, 69, 88, and 102) we are confronted with an exegetical problem of the most delicate description. In the interpretation of these psalms failure to set forth the reasons for the theory adopted is fatal.

Take for example Psalm 6. In vss. 1–7a the speaker describes himself as a sick man, in vs. 7 specifically referring to his bed, and prays that God may deliver him from his sickness. On the

other hand, in vss. 7b–10 all reference to sickness is dropped, and enemies take the place of sickness. Further, in these last verses there is no prayer for deliverance, but an assurance that God has already heard the psalmist's prayer and will deliver him from his enemies; the past tenses in vss. 8, 9, are "perfects of assurance." At first sight it seems as if the two parts could have nothing to do with each other and as if the psalm were composite. If unity is to be brought into the psalm, the most natural method is to hold that the sickness described in the first part is a figure for the persecution implied in the second part. Then the prayer for deliverance from sickness in vss. 1–7a becomes the prayer which is answered in vss. 7b–10, where the figure is dropped, and unity of subject is introduced into the psalm. But if the "I" is an individual, the poet has in the first part needlessly hidden his meaning. The reference certainly seems to be to actual sickness, and the sudden change in the last part to enemies is unmediated and confusing, and therefore bad from a literary point of view. If, on the other hand, the "I" is collective, it would be understood at once that sickness is only a figure, and hence the transition from the figure in vss. 1–7a to the thing figured in vss. 7b–10 would be natural and easy.

But there is another exegetical difficulty in this psalm. How can the sudden change from almost despairing entreaty in vss. 1–7a to confidence in vss. 7b–10 be accounted for? Why is the speaker so sure that God will stand by him as against his enemies? Why is he so certain that he is in the right? On the individualistic theory this is hard to explain. It is usually supposed that in the very expression of his despair the speaker induces a reaction and finds relief. Hope takes the place of agony. Of course this is psychologically possible, but it would seem far simpler to hold to the collective interpretation of the "I." In that case the community can be easily thought of as persuaded that the cause of the religion of Jahveh was so bound up in its own redemption that God must deliver it from its enemies. Thus, under the collective interpretation of the "I," the hope in vss. 8–10 becomes messianic.

The collective interpretation of Psalm 6 is strongly confirmed when we turn to Psalm 38. Here we meet with the same curious

difference between the first and last parts of the psalm. In vss. 1–11 the speaker describes himself as sick, but in vss. 12–22 (except vs. 17b) only persecution by enemies is referred to. In Psalm 38 there is not the change from despair to assurance which is found in Psalm 6, but there are several new and important factors which bear upon the interpretation of the "I." The description of the sickness is given in such varied terms that it can hardly refer to a real sickness, and the phraseology of verses 3, 5, and 7 seems to be consciously reminiscent of Isaiah 1 6, where the nation is described as sick. Most important of all, there is a remarkable, and at first sight unaccountable, paradox in the psalm. In the first half the singer acknowledges his guilt; it is because of his sin that all his troubles have come upon him. But in the second half (with the exception of vs. 18) he appears to be innocent and wrongfully persecuted by his enemies. It is hard to explain this paradox if the speaker is an individual, but simple if the "I" is collective. A community, especially if it be the community of the pious, can acknowledge its guilt, since it is a part of the nation, and can explain its sufferings accordingly. But as against the nations or the ungodly among the Jews themselves the congregation of the pious can maintain its innocence.

These, in outline, are the arguments which have been advanced to prove a collective "I" in these two very interesting, but at first sight perplexing, psalms. Does Briggs use any of these arguments or contribute anything new to the discussion? On Psalm 6 he merely remarks in the introductory note, "The Ps. was composed for the congregation, and there is no trace in it of the experience of an individual." In the exposition proper the collective theory is assumed, no exegetical argument being advanced for it.

No reference whatever is made to the peculiar relationship of the two parts of the psalm, and on the abrupt change from despair to assurance at vs. 8 we have the merely passing note that the congregation's "prayer receives its answer while they are making it." This would seem to imply the psychological explanation of the transition offered by the advocates of the individualistic interpretation,—an explanation which is unneces-

sary and even unnatural on the collective theory. The comment on the sympathetic relationship between the singer's trouble and his aching bones also agrees with Beer's individualistic interpretation of the psalm, but is hardly pertinent on the collective view. Again, vs. 5 must be interpreted figuratively if the "I" is collective, but no explanation of its figurative significance is forthcoming. To the statement that there is no trace of the experience of an individual in Psalm 6 an advocate of the opposite view might urge vs. 6; so Coblenz, though sympathetic toward the collective interpretation in many of the psalms, holds to the individualistic interpretation of Psalm 6 mainly on account of this one verse. Briggs ignores the difficulty which it presents to his theory.

On Psalm 38, again, there is not an argument advanced for the collective theory. On the contrary, our author robs himself of a very strong confirmatory argument furnished by this psalm, namely the paradox of the simultaneous confession of sin and the assertion of innocence by the speaker. On metrical grounds vss. 2–5 and vs. 18, in which the confession of sin is found, are rejected as accretions, and the paradox is thus removed; but at the same time the interesting argument from it for the collective theory is lost. On vs. 18b the suggestion is made that a later editor inserted this verse, "in order to adapt the psalm to public worship." But if the "I" is collective, the psalm must havebeen originally designed for public worship; the comment is really inconsistent with the view taken of the "I." On the collective theory some attempt should be made to identify the lovers and friends of vs. 11 and the enemies of vs. 12, but the comment on vs. 11 is simply the paraphrase "those upon whom I could ordinarily rely for sympathy and aid."[52] Nothing is distinctly said on the identification of the enemies. One might infer from

[52] A considerable portion of the exposition printed in large type is devoted to just such tautological paraphrases of the Biblical phraseology. For instance, in the present psalm, vs. 6, "*I am bent* || *bowed down*], by a weight of care, anxiety, and suffering, and this, *exceedingly*, to the utmost degree of intensity"; vs. 8, "*I am benumbed and crushed*]. Strength has so departed from him that he has become, as it were, paralysed and incapable of effort"; vs. 10, "*The light of mine eyes*], the light that illumines the eyes, enabling them to see what is to be done, giving confidence and courage."

the time at which the psalm is dated (in the restoration before Nehemiah) that foreign enemies were thought of, but this is not certain. As a matter of fact, in the comment on Psalm 6 the enemies are explained as "workers of trouble in Israel itself."

In Psalm 41 the various factors that entered into the identification of the "I" in Psalms 6 and 38 are again all present, but this time the concreteness of expression is so striking that the psalm would be almost unintelligible did we not have the two former psalms to guide us. Sickness and persecution are again found, but intermingled in a most confusing way. The enemies are represented as gathered around the bedside of the dying man, malignantly slandering him and devising evil against him (vs. 8). There is also the confession of guilt (vs. 4) and the assertion of innocence (vss. 11, 12) already found in Psalm 38, and the sudden transition from despair (vss. 1–9) to hope (vss. 10–12) found in Psalm 6, though in Psalm 41 an additional vengeful cry is sent up to the Lord for recovery in order that the speaker may requite his enemies. The individualizing traits of the psalm are especially pronounced. Smend says of it, "One can learn from this song how far the personification of the community can go." Duhm, on the other hand, who follows the individualistic interpretation throughout, draws a repulsive picture of the state of society reflected by this psalm,—with the sick man on his deathbed, surrounded by hypocritical friends who, like Job's comforters, argue from his sufferings to his wickedness and, dominated by their wretched dogmas, fairly gloat over his condition, while the dying man himself with his last breath cries to God for recovery so that he may avenge himself upon them. It is a lovely deathbed scene of one of the people of God!

Surely in the case of such a psalm there ought to be some discussion of the identification of the "I," with a defence of the collective theory, if that is adopted. But as usual there is simply the statement, "The Ps. is national . . . and there is no reference to an individual." This time Briggs seems to have felt that some explanation of vs. 9 on the collective theory is due. It is interpreted (in all probability correctly) of "nations in covenant, who have treacherously broken covenant and become bitter enemies," but unfortunately there is no reference to Obadiah 7

which supports the nationalistic interpretation, at least if the text of that passage can be trusted.[53] As in Psalm 38, the clause in which sin is confessed (vs. 4b) is rejected. It may be noted also that vs. 10b is dropped on metrical grounds.

An equal obliviousness to the need of any exegetical defence of the collective theory of the "I" is found in the exposition of Psalm 30, though here Sheol in verse 3, cf. verse 9, is interpreted of national exile, with reference to Ezekiel 37. This is the explanation which we looked for at the parallel passage Psalm 6 5. It was just as much needed there, but was not given.

On Psalm 88 there is a somewhat clearer exposition of the details of the psalm on the basis of the collective theory, and at vs. 15 there is the first exegetical argument for the collective "I" to be met with anywhere in the comment on the five psalms thus far reviewed. It is urged that the reference to "youth" in this verse cannot be satisfactorily explained if the "I" is an individual.[54]

In the case of Psalms 22, 69, and 102 the identification of the speaker is complicated by the serious critical problem of the integrity of these psalms. Psalm 69 I shall pass by, since the analysis of this psalm, both logically and poetically, is too uncertain to allow of a clear formulation of our problem. Attention need only be called to the fact that it is analyzed by Briggs into two distinct psalms, in one of which the "I" seems to be an individual prophet, and in the other the ideal community. The grounds for the analysis are metrical, and of doubtful cogency. Duhm, for example, has a different metrical theory of the psalm. Briggs makes no attempt to explain why the "I" is interpreted differently in the two parts which he thinks he can distinguish in the psalm.

[53] The crucial objection to the collective interpretation of Psalm 41 is found in vss. 1–3, a didactic observation and strongly individualizing. Briggs notes that these verses are "in a strange sort of isolation"; he adopts a new translation in order to connect them with what follows, but the translation is more than doubtful. If the collective theory is adopted, it is probable that vss. 1–3 will have to be eliminated. It is difficult to connect them with the rest of the psalm, even on the individualistic interpretation.

[54] The only meaning it could possibly have on the individualistic interpretation would be that the speaker had been all his life a chronic invalid. Duhm seeks by emendation to avoid this objection to the individualistic interpretation.

In the case of Psalms 22 and 102 the bearing of the critical problem upon the identification of the "I" can be much more readily grasped by the reader. Psalm 22 1–21 contrasts strikingly with vss. 22–31, and even the Revised Version separates the two parts by a space. On the supposition of the unity of the psalm, the praise for the deliverance of the afflicted in vss. 22–31 can be naturally interpreted only as praise for the deliverance of the afflicted speaker in vss. 1–21. Now this deliverance not only has a national significance (vs. 23), but has a world-wide application (vs. 27), in fact a messianic significance in the largest sense. The nations are to be converted to Jahveh because of this deliverance, and its effects will be felt upon nations yet unborn, vss. 27–31. If we allow vss. 22–31 to govern our theory of the personality of the speaker in the first part of the psalm, he must be either a most extraordinary individual, who yet cannot be identified with any person known in Jewish history, or he is the personified community.[55] The advocates of the collective "I" urge vss. 22–31 as one of the strongest arguments in support of their theory. This is said to be corroborated by the fact that in vs. 4 the personification is dropped for a moment and the actual "we" of the congregation appears ("Our fathers trusted in thee"), and by the further fact that the present condition of the "I" in vs. 6 (very emphatic in the Hebrew) seems to contrast with the previous condition of the nation in vss. 4, 5, which would be unnatural except on the collective theory. It might be thought that at vss. 22 and 25 the speaker separates himself from the community and is accordingly an individual. There is a difficulty here for the collective interpretation, but it is by no means fatal. We may explain it with Smend by the theory that "Israel is distinct from the Israelites, cf. Hosea 1 and 2," or we may suppose with Coblenz that in verses 22 and 25 the individual members of the congregation are speaking.

In our commentary the collective theory of the speaker seems to be adopted, but the unity of the psalm is denied, and of the last part only verses 22 and 25 are admitted to belong to the original. Herein is a marvellous thing. That part of the psalm which

[55] Even Calvin did not venture to identify the speaker in this psalm directly with Christ.

can be urged most forcibly for the collective theory is rejected, but those verses which bear most strongly against the theory are retained. Yet the collective theory is adopted without one word of explanation as to the bearing of either of these points upon it. In this psalm, however, we meet with the second instance thus far observed of an exegetical argument for the collective theory of the "I." In the introduction to the psalm it is said that "the description is too varied for any individual experience." But no inference as to the nature of the "I" is drawn from the first person plural in vss. 4, 5.[56]

Finally, with regard to Psalm 102, if its unity is accepted, the case for the collective "I" may be considered to be proved beyond peradventure. In vss. 13 ff. Zion stands out in her own proper person. If there is any connection at all between these verses and what has gone before, the "I" of the first part of the psalm must be collective. As for Psalm 22, the collective theory is maintained ("the author wrote in the person of afflicted Israel"), but the unity of the psalm, which is the strongest support of the theory, is denied. It must be confessed that the argument for the composite character of Psalm 102 is particularly strong, but the point is that our author seems quite oblivious of the bearing of the critical question upon the exegesis.

The present reviewer cannot pretend to have examined the treatment accorded to all the "I-psalms" in the present commentary. But a typical group of them has been selected in which the exegetical problem of the identification of the "I" is peculiarly acute and demands at least an attempt at solution. For not one of these psalms is there anything that can be called a discussion of the question. Only two exegetical arguments in favor of the collective "I" have been found in the sixty-two

[56] The unity of Psalm 22 is a fairly debatable question. The transition from the first part to the second is certainly abrupt. Yet it has its analogy in Psalm 6, the integrity of which is universally admitted. Further, the relation of the last part to the first corresponds so strikingly with Isa. 53 (cf. Beer's illuminating exposition) that it seems hardly due to chance compilation. But even if the original unity of the psalm is denied, the present combination of the two parts can hardly have been made on any other than a collective theory of the "I" (unless we hold that it is due simply to accident), and hence it may be argued that at the time of the redaction of this psalm the collective theory of the "I" was prevalent (a point not noticed by Briggs).

pages devoted to the exposition of these psalms. The theory is regularly assumed, but the arguments for it are either ignored or are actually invalidated, as by the critical theories adopted in the case of Psalms 22, 69, and 102. The difficulties in the way of the theory, especially those presented by the detailed personifications which must be assumed, are largely passed over without a word of explanation. This means that the really vital problems in the interpretation of these interesting and important psalms are scarcely touched, for they can only be revealed in a discussion of the identification of the "I."[57]

It is unnecessary to sum up the general results of our review. The dissent from the methods followed in this commentary may seem to some to have been emphasized too strongly; yet I trust that the discussion has made it evident that the dissent is an honest and not a captious one. Of the four topics which have been reviewed, the interest and permanent value of the commentary, apart from the vast collection of material, word-studies, and discussions of the literary relationships of the psalms, lie in the treatment of the poetical form of the psalms. The establishment of the original poetic forms of the psalms is the one dominant interest of the commentary. Here many valuable suggestions have undoubtedly been made of which the professional student of the future will make grateful use. But in the nature

[57] In the above discussion as to the nature of the speaker no notice has been taken of the light which the Babylonian penitential psalms may throw upon the problem. These psalms would seem to have been originally individualistic, though afterwards adapted to liturgical purposes. In many respects they are very similar to the Hebrew "invalid psalms" (compare the end of the truly remarkable psalm cited in Jeremias, "Das Alte Testament im Lichte des alten Orients," pp. 210 ff., with Ps. 41), and might suggest that after all the "I" in the latter psalms was originally individualistic, though its exegetical argument is strongly in favor of a collective theory. Briggs does not refer to the Babylonian analogies in his comments on the psalms which have been examined above. In general, the analogies between the Hebrew Psalter and other ancient Oriental literature do not seem greatly to interest him. He does not once mention the great hymn of Chuenaten in his exposition of Ps. 104. He alludes to the Babylonian Tiamat-myth in connection with Ps. 89 10 ff., but unfortunately explains the very similar passage Ps. 74 12 ff. of the redemption from Egypt, whereas it almost certainly refers to the creation-myth. On the other hand, it is interesting to notice that Briggs inclines to an original mythological background for Ps. 19. In this view he agrees with Gunkel, though the two scholars arrived at it quite independently of one another.

of the case those results are not exact or final, but are necessarily conjectural. The lay reader or minister or theological student who may use this book must constantly keep in mind the tentative nature of the poetical analysis, and always test the reconstruction by the requirements of exegesis. Unfortunately, on the side of exegesis the commentary does not inspire confidence.

MEDIAEVAL GERMAN MYSTICISM

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The German mysticism of the fourteenth century was one of the most remarkable manifestations of that individualistic trend of thought and feeling which set in during the thirteenth century with the height of chivalric culture, developed under the influence of the growth of civic independence in the great municipal republics, and finally, in the religious Reformation of the sixteenth century, overturned the whole corporate system of the mediaeval church and state.

The fundamental thought of the German mystics of the fourteenth century was nothing new. It was a revived and christianized Neoplatonism. Throughout the Middle Ages more subtle thinkers had been fascinated by the neoplatonic conception, that the world is an incessant and gradual differentiation of the originally undivided and undifferentiated Divine; that man, however, and man alone, possesses the power by a free act of will to reverse this incessant process of differentiation, and thus to return from the diaspora of manifold phenomena into the oneness of the undivided Divine. The so-called Dionysius Areopagita, Scotus Erigena, Hugo and Richard of St. Victor, Bernard of Clairvaux—these all see the essential goal of human life in this return from the many into the one; they all love to dwell on the different stages of inner concentration by which man approaches this goal; they all praise enthusiastically the state of highest self-surrender where man is completely welded into one with the Divine—as the waterdrop is resolved into wine; or as iron, melting in the fire, seems to become fire, or as the air, illuminated by the sun, seems itself to become sunlight. It is, however, no exaggeration to say that this ideal of complete self-surrender of the individual to the infinite has seldom produced such a variety of individual life as in the German mystics of the fourteenth century. Three of the most pronounced personalities